



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE Detention And Removal Sets Record For Fiscal Year 2004 *Alien Removals Increase by 12,000; Fugitive Alien Apprehensions Climb 112 Percent*

WASHINGTON – The removal of criminal and other illegal aliens from the United States reached record levels, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced today, with 157,281 aliens total removed in Fiscal Year 2004. In addition, ICE recorded a sizable increase in apprehensions under a new program specifically targeting fugitive aliens.

ICE's Office of Detention and Removal Operations (DRO), responsible for removals of aliens, credited the fiscal year increases with the agency's more aggressive focus on targeting criminal and fugitive aliens – those who pose the most serious risks to public safety and national security. As the largest investigative agency in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), ICE is responsible for the enforcement of the nation's immigration and customs laws.

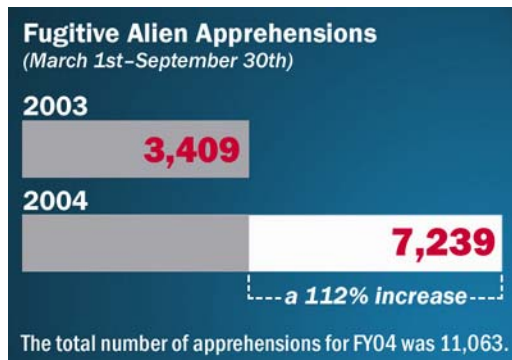
"Removing criminal aliens and other illegal aliens from the United States is critical to the integrity of our immigration system and important to the safety of our communities," said DHS Assistant Secretary for ICE, Michael J. Garcia. "The 9/11 Commission Report details how our immigration system was exploited by terrorists, and we know that other dangerous criminals have sought illegal entry by similar means. We are bringing to bear the full force of our authorities to locate and remove those in the country illegally."

Nearly 53 percent of those removed were criminal aliens – that is, aliens who are eligible for removal based upon a criminal conviction in the United States. ICE removals of criminal aliens reached 82,802 in FY04, an increase of 6.6 percent over the previous fiscal year. Removals of non-criminal aliens increased by over 10 percent to 74,479.

ICE also noted significant gains in apprehending and deporting fugitive aliens – individuals who were ordered deported from the United States but who failed to report for removal – under the National Fugitive Operations Program (NFOP).

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From March 1 through Sept. 30, 2003, when ICE began tracking fugitive apprehensions, DRO apprehended 3,409 fugitives with final orders of removal. By comparison, in the same seven-month period of FY04, DRO apprehended 7,239 fugitives with final orders of removal, an increase of 112 percent over the FY03 period. Total FY04 apprehensions of fugitives were 11,063.



DRO also contributed substantially to Operation Predator, ICE's initiative for targeting criminals who sexually exploit children. Operation Predator has resulted in more than 4,300 arrests nationwide in just over one year. Approximately 85 percent of those arrested were foreign national sexual predators whose crimes make them deportable. Since the initiative began in July 2003, DRO has deported more than 2,100 child predators.

In addition to removals, DRO made significant progress with two new programs that serve as cost-effective alternatives to detention for aliens who do not pose threats to national security or public safety. The Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP), which began as a pilot program in a few selected cities, is now operating in eight DRO field offices. To date, more than 1,300 aliens have enrolled in the ISAP pilot program.

Additionally, DRO this year established the Electronic Monitoring Devices (EMD) program to ensure compliance with court and removal orders. Through October, 1,566 aliens have enrolled to wear either a monitoring ankle bracelet or report by telephone to a case manager as part of the program.

A report released on November 8 by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the investigative arm of Congress, noted that ICE's immigration enforcement efforts are "moving in the right direction" thanks to improved planning and performance measures under the agency's Homeland Security mission. For more on the GAO report (titled "Immigration Enforcement: DHS Has Incorporated Immigration Enforcement Objectives and is Addressing Future Planning Requirements"), visit GAO online at www.gao.gov.

For more information on ICE, Detention and Removal Operations and immigration enforcement, visit us online at www.ice.gov.

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